

## Department of Veterans Affairs

## § 4.63

adhesion about the peroneal sheaths, and other evidence of pain and limited motion. The symptoms should be apparent without regard to exercise. In severe cases there is gaping of bones on the inner border of the foot, and rigid valgus position with loss of the power of inversion and adduction. Exercise with undeveloped or unbalanced musculature, producing chronic irritation, can be an aggravating factor. In the absence of trauma or other definite evidence of aggravation, service connection is not in order for pes cavus which is a typically congenital or juvenile disease.

### § 4.58 Arthritis due to strain.

With service incurred lower extremity amputation or shortening, a disabling arthritis, developing in the same extremity, or in both lower extremities, with indications of earlier, or more severe, arthritis in the injured extremity, including also arthritis of the lumbosacral joints and lumbar spine, if associated with the leg amputation or shortening, will be considered as service incurred, provided, however, that arthritis affecting joints not directly subject to strain as a result of the service incurred amputation will not be granted service connection. This will generally require separate evaluation of the arthritis in the joints directly subject to strain. Amputation, or injury to an upper extremity, is not considered as a causative factor with subsequently developing arthritis, except in joints subject to direct strain or actually injured.

### § 4.59 Painful motion.

With any form of arthritis, painful motion is an important factor of disability, the facial expression, wincing, etc., on pressure or manipulation, should be carefully noted and definitely related to affected joints. Muscle spasm will greatly assist the identification. Sciatic neuritis is not uncommonly caused by arthritis of the spine. The intent of the schedule is to recognize painful motion with joint or periarticular pathology as productive of disability. It is the intention to recognize actually painful, unstable, or malaligned joints, due to healed injury, as entitled to at least the minimum

compensable rating for the joint. Crepitation either in the soft tissues such as the tendons or ligaments, or crepitation within the joint structures should be noted carefully as points of contact which are diseased. Flexion elicits such manifestations. The joints involved should be tested for pain on both active and passive motion, in weight-bearing and nonweight-bearing and, if possible, with the range of the opposite undamaged joint.

### § 4.60 [Reserved]

### § 4.61 Examination.

With any form of arthritis (except traumatic arthritis) it is essential that the examination for rating purposes cover all major joints, with especial reference to Heberden's or Haygarth's nodes.

### § 4.62 Circulatory disturbances.

The circulatory disturbances, especially of the lower extremity following injury in the popliteal space, must not be overlooked, and require rating generally as phlebitis.

### § 4.63 Loss of use of hand or foot.

Loss of use of a hand or a foot, for the purpose of special monthly compensation, will be held to exist when no effective function remains other than that which would be equally well served by an amputation stump at the site of election below elbow or knee with use of a suitable prosthetic appliance. The determination will be made on the basis of the actual remaining function of the hand or foot, whether the acts of grasping, manipulation, etc., in the case of the hand, or of balance and propulsion, etc., in the case of the foot, could be accomplished equally well by an amputation stump with prosthesis.

(a) Extremely unfavorable complete ankylosis of the knee, or complete ankylosis of 2 major joints of an extremity, or shortening of the lower extremity of 3½ inches (8.9 cms.) or more, will be taken as loss of use of the hand or foot involved.

(b) Complete paralysis of the external popliteal nerve (common peroneal) and consequent, footdrop, accompanied

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by characteristic organic changes including trophic and circulatory disturbances and other concomitants confirmatory of complete paralysis of this nerve, will be taken as loss of use of the foot.

[29 FR 6718, May 22, 1964, as amended at 43 FR 45349, Oct. 2, 1978]

#### **§ 4.64 Loss of use of both buttocks.**

Loss of use of both buttocks shall be deemed to exist when there is severe damage to muscle Group XVII, bilateral (diagnostic code number 5317) and additional disability rendering it impossible for the disabled person, without assistance, to rise from a seated position and from a stooped position (fingers to toes position) and to maintain postural stability (the pelvis upon head of femur). The assistance may be rendered by the person's own hands or arms, and, in the matter of postural stability, by a special appliance.

#### **§ 4.65 [Reserved]**

#### **§ 4.66 Sacroiliac joint.**

The common cause of disability in this region is arthritis, to be identified in the usual manner. The lumbosacral and sacroiliac joints should be considered as one anatomical segment for rating purposes. X-ray changes from arthritis in this location are decrease or obliteration of the joint space, with the appearance of increased bone density of the sacrum and ilium and sharpening of the margins of the joint. Disability is manifest from erector spinae spasm (not accounted for by other pathology), tenderness on deep palpation and percussion over these joints, loss of normal quickness of motion and resiliency, and postural defects often accompanied by limitation of flexion and extension of the hip. Traumatism is a rare cause of disability in this connection, except when superimposed upon congenital defect or upon an existent arthritis; to permit assumption of pure traumatic origin, objective evidence of damage to the joint, and history of trauma sufficiently severe to injure this extremely strong and practically immovable joint is required. There should be careful consideration of lumbosacral sprain, and the various symptoms of pain and paralysis attrib-

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utable to disease affecting the lumbar vertebrae and the intervertebral disc.

#### **§ 4.67 Pelvic bones.**

The variability of residuals following these fractures necessitates rating on specific residuals, faulty posture, limitation of motion, muscle injury, painful motion of the lumbar spine, manifest by muscle spasm, mild to moderate sciatic neuritis, peripheral nerve injury, or limitation of hip motion.

#### **§ 4.68 Amputation rule.**

The combined rating for disabilities of an extremity shall not exceed the rating for the amputation at the elective level, were amputation to be performed. For example, the combined evaluations for disabilities below the knee shall not exceed the 40 percent evaluation, diagnostic code 5165. This 40 percent rating may be further combined with evaluation for disabilities above the knee but not to exceed the above the knee amputation elective level. Painful neuroma of a stump after amputation shall be assigned the evaluation for the elective site of re-amputation.

#### **§ 4.69 Dominant hand.**

Handedness for the purpose of a dominant rating will be determined by the evidence of record, or by testing on VA examination. Only one hand shall be considered dominant. The injured hand, or the most severely injured hand, of an ambidextrous individual will be considered the dominant hand for rating purposes.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

[62 FR 30239, June 3, 1997]

#### **§ 4.70 Inadequate examinations.**

If the report of examination is inadequate as a basis for the required consideration of service connection and evaluation, the rating agency may request a supplementary report from the examiner giving further details as to the limitations of the disabled person's ordinary activity imposed by the disease, injury, or residual condition, the prognosis for return to, or continuance of, useful work. When the best interests of the service will be advanced by personal conference with the examiner,